



**Start of [Excerpt from 'A History of
the Jews of Kojetin'].**

AR 11370

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[Excerpt from 'A History of the Jews of Kojetin']

1929

Archives -

[REDACTED]
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, May 15, 2002 9:47 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: roots

Dear Stephen,

The following is an except from 'A History Of the Jews of Kojetin' written in 1929. If you do a google search on Simon Rosenfeld and Henriette Rosenfeld, my great grandparents, you will find this page. Do a 'ctrl f' and look for the word Rosenfeld, to see their historical entries. I never knew he was the mayor of Kojetin; possibly my mother never knew.

All the best,

Richard

To return to the story of the Jewish community, since its reorganization in 1718 its growth had been steady, and no accounts of major upheavals or violence have come down to us. Oral tradition speaks only of difficulties under Empress Maria Theresa during the war with Silesia, and particularly of the harsh conditions imposed upon the Jews when they were threatened with expulsion from Bohemia and Moravia. Restrictions on marriage had a repressive effect upon Kojetin, as did the imposition in 1848 of high taxes payable to the Imperial tax collectors.

By 1727 470 Jews were living in Kojetin in 40 dwellings, proof that the population and the number of occupied dwellings had returned to their previous levels. The Jewish community lived peacefully in accordance with the rulings of the Moravian Synodal Assemblies and the Shai Tekkanoth, the old Statutes that were approved in 1754 as general, police, court, and guild regulations.

The Rescript of June 27, 1727, which recommended maintenance of the complete separation of the Jewish houses, indicates that conditions in Kojetin had changed very little. However, the community still had a Street of the Jews that in contrast to other narrow, dark ghettos had light and airy houses surrounded by courtyards, gardens, and meadows.

The documents in the Kojetin Archives relative to this period provide very instructive information about the economic and cultural conditions of the Kojetin Jews early in the nineteenth century. Of particular value, however, is a statistical description of the Jewish community prepared by the Kojetin Provisions Office upon instructions from the Imperial and Royal District Office in Olomouc (Olmutz) on October 26, 1829.

This report indicates that the Kojetin Jewish community was under the jurisdiction of the Kojetin domain, owned at that time by Prince Viktor von Metternich-Winneberg. It consisted of 45 dwellings housing 443 persons. According to the royal Letters Patent of September 15, 1798, 76 families was the permissible number for the community (5,400 for Moravia as a whole). Before the number of families was established, the community had 112 family members, so that when deaths occurred the surplus individuals were included in the statutory number.

The Jewish community was poor, and its principal business activity was trade, chiefly in hides, wax, feathers, and wool. The inhabitants included seven tradesmen, five shopkeepers, four peddlers, 12 businessmen (including one butcher, three tailors, and eight glaziers) and 35 persons engaged in miscellaneous occupations. The well-maintained synagogue included a dry meadow, which was rented out yearly; the rent was paid into the community treasury.

David Buchheim was the Rabbi; he was paid an annual compensation of 550 fr. W.W. (Wiener Währung - Viennese Currency.) while the shammes Abraham Stern was paid 150 fr. W.W. and the synagogue custodian Isac Setl received 42 fr. W.W. out of the charity fund.

No fees were paid for circumcisions. For weddings, the rabbi and the shammes collected the taxes prescribed in the police regulations for the Jews. Burial fees were paid out of the deceased's estate, or his next-of-kin, depending on the case.

The community had its own well-maintained community house in which the Ra'h'i lived, and its own school, with 66 children in attendance. Instruction was provided in two classes. The community paid the teacher, Isac Sonnenschein, 60 fr. W.W. a year. He held a Befähigungsdekret (certificate of competence) issued by the Diocesan Consistory, and was appointed by the authorities upon the proposal of the community.

The local school inspector, Samuel Kaufmann, was appointed by a decree of the district office. The subjects taught in the Jewish school included those required in the provincial schools, together with Bible history in conjunction with religion; the textbook used was the B'nai Zion, which contained teachings on morality and religion. The Jewish Court consisted of the Jewish judge, at that time Jakob Klopfer, two counselors, Bernard Kaufmann and Aron Kirschner, and four jurors. This court dealt with the local police, administered the community assets, and resolved minor disputes. In addition to the community house the community owned a slaughterhouse, a bath, and the dry meadow.

These three properties were rented out for 180 fr. W.W., 15 fr. W.W., and 80 fr. W.W., or a total of 275 fr. W.W. As noted in this report, the dry meadow had been linked with the Jewish dwellings since time immemorial, although under the provincial laws the Jews were not permitted to own rural land. The community's ownership of the cemetery also dated from the remote past.

According to this statistical description the preliminary tax assessment

imposed on the Kojetin Jewish community was as follows. A tax was owed on the rental income of 275 fr. W.W., and the community also had to pay other fees and taxes. The lord of the domain collected 5 fr. KonventionsmUnzen. for each of the 76 established and four additional families, or a total of 400 fr. K.M. The one-third surcharge owed as class tax was 340 fr. K.M. The government received 258 fr. W.W. for protection and for domestic assessments. Another assessment was a keg of beer or the then-current price of 21.20 fr. W.W. for the clearing of the government meadow. The aforementioned salaries and miscellaneous disbursements required another 1,055 fr. W.W. In return, 740 fr. K.M. and 1,065 fr. W.W. had to be distributed individually to the members of the community.

There were other taxes, including a consumption tax of 500 fr. W.W., an inheritance tax of 92.30 fr. W.W., and a personal tax of 50 fr. W.W. All taxes and assessments were divided among the individual families according to their means. The basis for this division was a property survey prepared by five assessors.

According to the 1829 census, the 76 established families of kojetin were:

1.	Jakob Arelh	

	2.	 Jelinek Singer	

	3.	 Isak Gramisch	

	4.	 Israel Grunhut	

	5.	Jakob Haas	

	6.	 Isak Sonnenschein	

	7.	Markus Scmeidler	

	8.	 Zacharias Polak	

	9.	Philipp Liebmann	

	10.	Michael Deutsch	

	11.	 Hermann Seidl	

	12.	 Isak Seidl	
	13.	 Herrmann Steiner	
	14.	 Bernard Gutmann	
	15.	 Salomon Konig	
	16.	 Jakob Fuchs	
	17.	 Jakob Gramisch	
	18.	 Bernard Kaufmann	
	19.	 Pinkus Kirschner	
	20.	 Bernard Kurz	
	21.	 Isak Zimlich	
	22.	 Samuel Kaufmann	
	23.	 Jakob Lowenthal	
	24.	 Jakob Reichsfeld	
	25.	 Jakob Turadt	
	26.	 Abraham Liebmann	
	27.	 Aron Lowenthal	
	28.	 Lazar Pollak	
	29.	 Jakob Seidi	
	30.	 Isak Blum	
	31.	 Philipp Langer	
	32.	 Markus Weiskopf	
	33.	 Jakob Zimlich	
	34.	 biarkus Schiller	

	35	 Wolf Lowenthal	
	36.	 Lazar Gottlieb	
	37.	 Moses Stern	
	38. 	Jakob Lbwenthal
	39.	 Samuel Kurz	
	40. 	Joseph Konig	
	41. 	 Lazar Weiskopf
	42.	 Ludwig Hochberg
	43. 	Michel Sonne
	44. 	Isak Kaufmann
	45. 	Isak Eisler
	46. 	Markus Kaufmann
	47. 	Israel Bick
	48. 	Jakob Klopfer
	49.	 Jakob Hausner
	50.	 Ldbel Langer
	51.	 Moses Krasny
	52. 	Jakob Sonne
	53. 	Jakob Blum
	54. 	Bernard Schmeidler
	55. 	Isak Stern
	56.	 Jakob Brunner

	57.	 Jakob Hausner
	58.	 Markus Steiner
	59. 	Jonas Schiller
	60.	 Markus Krasny
	61. 	Samuel Hochberg
	62. 	Simon Lowy
	63. 	Joachim Sauerbrunn
	64.	 Abraham Zimlich
	65.	 Joachim Pollak
	66.	 Jakob Gluckselig
	67. 	Abraham Schiller
	68.	 Joseph Vogl
	69 	Moses Brunner
	70. 	Abraham Gramisch
	71. 	Jakob Seidl
	72. 	Aron Kirschner
	73. 	Markus Eisler
	74. 	Joachim Langeh
	75. 	Jakob Pfefferkorn
	76.	 Lohl Schein

In addition, there were six surplus families:

79.	Jakob Brunner

81.	David Gottlich

96.	Daniel Klein

98.	Judas Pichler

109.	Joseph Rothkopf

110.	Salomon Kellner.

The word "died out" is indicated next to the other family entries between 77 and 112.

For the most part the successors of the bearers of these names were still living in Kojetin in the 1870s and 1880s, and today they are found throughout Moravia, particularly in Brno and Olomouc, but also in Vienna.

Given the relatively large number of Jews in Kojetin, and their relatively high birth rate, the established family limit indicated was inadequate. Thus many individuals who were not the first-born of their families, and who therefore had no chance of being authorized to found a family, secretly contracted religious marriages. The Kojetin officials appear to have a liberal point of view on this subject. A report by the Kojetin Provisions Office dated April 15, 1830, gives evidence of orders to investigate secret marriages among the Jews:

"Here, as perhaps in all Jewish communities, single Jewish women have given birth to children, and even to two or three children, and since there are no complaints as regards the costs of maintenance and education, the father of these children apparently supports the mother and they seem to have a secret living arrangement without however living together.

"Whether there is a secret marital bond between them must nevertheless be suspected. It cannot be proven, however, because:

1. when questioned regarding the existence of such a marital bond between them, both parties deny it;

2 According to Jewish religious principles, neither two publications of the banns of marriage nor the joining of the parties by the Rabbi, or the calling upon heaven, are necessary; and there are no definite criteria for proving the existence of a secret and unlawful marriage

3. when because of their businesses unmarried Jews must maintain an individual household, they are permitted to have female help. In the course of time the maid became a housekeeper and mother, and is scarcely distinguishable from a lawfully wedded wife in the house of her employer.

"This mischief cannot be countered by legislative measures, and perhaps the time may have come to ease the restriction on Jewish marriages, since the grounds therefor no longer exist."

The Provisions Office also provided a report dated November 16, 1827, in response to an inquiry of the Imperial and Royal District Office in Olomouc on a matter relative to modifying the supreme Rescript of June 23, 1727, to bring it into line with current conditions. This report, which is imbued with a genuinely liberal spirit, was occasioned by the renting of a Christian building by a Jew, something that was expressly forbidden by the Rescript.

"In view of the progress made by the nations in the past hundred years in intellectual formation, and the humane spirit resulting therefrom, a spirit that animates not only the peoples but their governments as well, it is not surprising that a political law dating from the age of intolerance is no longer in accord with the present age. At that time the Jews were regarded as a depraved people with as few civil rights as the slaves of an earlier age. The law that excluded them from any community with the Christians corresponded completely with the intolerant spirit of that time. It also led to the unfortunate state of affairs in which the Jews were treated by the Christians in a hostile manner and assumed the same stance and degenerated into slaves, instead of participating in the general progress of culture and humanity. This unfortunate phenomenon is still evident today in the Jewish population, and will not be completely eradicated until the Jews have equal rights with the other citizen.

"Seen from this point of view, the supreme Rescript of June 27, 1727, can be viewed as no longer meritorious of existence since it is no longer in accord with the contemporary spirit, and the undersigned Provisions Office is therefore of the opinion that the same should be expressly rescinded and the tolerated Jews should be permitted to rent Christian houses; which opinion is based on the grounds that this law de facto no longer exists, since in the cities where Jewish communities exist outside the streets and highways, the Jews in fact have established themselves in Christian houses. As evidence hereof we can mention

Kremsier (Kromeriz) Prossnitz (Prostejov), and Weisskirchen (Hranice) But a law that is not administered should be revoked, because if it remains in existence all other laws lose their power.

"For the municipal authorities to establish a district in which the Jews would have their residences cannot in general be done, and thus it is also difficult to make this a law applicable to all."

Thus we see that even in Kojetin serious difficulties were caused by the separating of the Jews and the restriction of Jewish marriages, that even the authorities and the Christians were opposed to this, and that they were animated by the spirit of the patent of tolerance of the Emperor Josef. Here, as everywhere else, the way was being paved for the great Jewish emancipation that was finally put into effect in 1849, during the reign of Emperor Franz Josef.

The period between that year until around 1890 was the golden age of the Jewish community of Kojetin, and it coincided with the period of the Rabbi Jakob Brull. The well-being and the cultural level of the Kojetin Jews, who now founded and operated businesses without restriction, and who could now be educated and contract marriage, rose considerably. They enjoyed great success in trade and business, established homes and respectable businesses in the city outside the Jewish quarter, and also went in for agriculture. The Jewish community thus became characterized by a very lively spirit and a great variety of activities. Evening social life developed in the friendly Jewish quarter, particularly on holidays, when guests came from near and far to visit their relatives; the streets then provided a picture of genuine Jewish life after the Sabbath service.

In many families education, sociability, and genuine Judaism were cultivated with heartfelt sincerity. The distinguished scholar and writer David Kaufmann was the scion of such a respected Kojetin family. A professor at the Budapest rabbinical school, through his writings and discourses as well as his pedagogical work in the Jewish world he became an eternal monument to the honor of the city of Kojetin. His brother, the economist Ignaz Kaufmann, was another jewel in the crown of the Jewish community of Kojetin, thanks to his intellectual and emotional qualities.

Dr. David Kaufmann was born in Kojetin on June 7, 1852. He studied under Rabbi Jakob Brull in Kojetin, and with his son Nehemias Brull in Wroclaw (Breslau). He received his Doctorate in January 1874 from the University of Leipzig, and was ordained Rabbi in January 1877. That same year he was appointed a professor at the newly opened State Rabbinate Seminary in Budapest. His scientific and literary output in a wide variety of fields was a subject of general amazement. Thirty books and more than 500 learned essays in all languages testify to his prodigious creativity. (A bibliography of his works can be found in the

Kaufmann Gedenkbuch (commemorative volume) published in Breslau in 1901.) An accident ended his life in its prime on July 7, 1899, in Karlovy Vary (Karlsbad).

There were many other distinguished Jewish citizens in Kojetin. One of them was Dr. Bachrach, an outstanding Viennese lawyer and Imperial Counsellor of Justice, who spent his childhood in Kojetin; Siegmund Steiner of Bratislava (Pressburg), a writer and book dealer, was another, and the well known Prostějov physician Dr. I. Lowenthal carried the venerable tradition of the Kojetin Jewish communities even into other countries.

when the Jewish Court was abolished in 1848, the year of emancipation, Jakob Fischer, David Stern, Israel Weisskopf and Alexander Donath functioned as mayors of the Jewish community. During this period of unfettered impetus of the community, a good relationship developed between the community and the ruler, Count Sandor Metternich, and particularly his wife, Countess Pauline Metternich. Many stories about the jovial and helpful Countess were proudly circulated among the Jewish population down to recent years.

During the second half of the 1880s this flowering of Kojetin came to an end because of a deterioration of economic conditions for the Jews, despite liberalism and emancipation. The result was a drift to the large cities and heavy emigration of the young people. By 1890 the diminished Jewish community found it difficult, because of its severe financial burden, to decide whether to hire a Rabbi.

During the closing years of the prosperity of the Kojetin Jewish community and beyond, that is, from 1881 to 1900, the Mayor of the Jewish community was Simon Rosenfeld, the founding father of a large and respected family and the owner of a brewery and a large business. He was a member of the City Council, an admirer of progress, and an able representative of the community in its dealings with the outside world.

He thereby made a great contribution to the increased prestige of the Jewish community with the Christians of Kojetin.

He was followed by Moriz Biek (1900-1919) and Moriz Lowenthal (after 1919). Both men rendered major services in skillfully guiding the community in the true Jewish spirit despite difficult economic circumstances and the reduced membership of the community. Moriz Lowenthal's contribution was particularly significant.

Mention should also be made of the last Cantor of the community, Josef Grunstein,

who became Cantor at the age of 32 and died in 1924.

We have already mentioned the two-class Jewish elementary school, which was of great importance for the cultural and social development of the Jewish community. Its teacher Isac Sonnenschein was followed by Mr. Steiner, who subsequently moved to Boskovice (Boskowitz); he was followed by Heinrich Bohm and Josef Kronfeld.

Bohm was an intellectually superior man who spoke fluently and taught in French, which at that time indicated a superior degree of training. The last Jewish teacher, who taught until 1910, was Ignaz Sametz. From then on until the collapse in 1918, when the school ceased to exist, it had only Christian teachers. The two-story school building was built in 1867, opposite the entrance to the synagogue; it had two classrooms, a meeting room, and the ritual Bath.

For that time it was a stately structure that did honor to the Jewish community. It is still in existence and still owned by the community, but it now houses the gendarmerie.

Another institution that maintained the Jewish spirit and tradition in the community was the Chevra-Kadisha, which according to tradition had been in existence for some 500 years. Its statutes date from the year 1883. It was presided over from 1883 to 1900 by Simon Rosenfeld; from 1900 to 1907 by Moriz Biek; and after 1907 by Leopold Weisskopf.

A women's association was rounded in 1883, and made an important contribution to the maintenance of the Kojetin Jewish community and to charitable work. Closely connected with the spiritual work of this association were its presidents, Henriette Rosenfeld (1886-1889), a Jewish woman distinguished for her outstanding charity, Therese Kaufmann (1889-1905), Sopkaufmann (1905-1926), and Henriette Langer (after 1926).

The once blooming Jewish community of Kojetin has now shrunk to 32 members, and it now shares the Rabbinate of Prerov (Prerau) with the communities of Ivanovice (Eiwanowitz), Vyskov (Wischau), and Prerov. It is now unable even to maintain a Cantor, a function that is performed at Sabbath service, in accordance with tradition, by the members of the little commu.

Great sacrifices were made in 1901 to build a new cemetery crypt and wall, in a design by the architect Stiassny, in order of the deceased Professor Dr. David Kaufmann.

The little community maintains the synagogue and cemetery with great effort, but also skillfully and to the best of its ability, under the particular supervision of the present community mayor, Moriz Lowenthal.

A new roof was recently installed on the synagogue, the interior was repaired, and a memorial plaque in honor of President Masaryk was installed. In its simplicity and good condition, the synagogue is edifying and dignified.

The cemetery is located in a beautiful site, and is filled with trees, flower beds, and lawns. Its gravestones are perfectly maintained, and it now has a dignified new memorial in honor of the unforgettable Rabbi Jakob Brull. The cemetery offers the picture of a genuinely good place that recalls the golden age of the Jewish community of Kojetin and many beloved figures who still live in memory. There is one consolation in these melancholy reflections, and it comes to us from the mouth of the valiant mayor of the community: Some of the young Jews still cling to Kojetin, thus ensuring that the venerable community will not perish as so many other Moravian communities have.

Previous



**End of [Excerpt from 'A History of
the Jews of Kojetin'].**

